The Public Trust, Transparency, and Integrity Amendment

A Constitutional Framework for Transparency, Accountability, and Ethical Governance

This packet presents a proposed constitutional amendment, a one■page summary, anticipated criticisms and responses, and a factual dossier of documented ethics and conflict■of■interest cases. Together, these materials are intended to support informed evaluation by legislators, agencies, civic organizations, and the public.

Prepared for public review and civic discussion
Non■partisan • Fact■based • Due■process grounded

© TheOrderedLiberty — CC BY 4.0 — Attrib

One-Page Summary: The Public Trust, Transparency, and Integrity Amendment

The Problem

Public confidence in government has been steadily eroded by opaque lobbying, undisclosed foreign influence, insider trading by officials, the revolving door between public office and special interests, and repeated moral failures by individuals entrusted with power. Existing ethics laws are fragmented, weakly enforced, and easily bypassed. Too often, accountability depends on partisan control rather than consistent standards, while predators and corrupt actors exploit secrecy, complexity, and institutional inertia. The result is a system where public service appears to reward self-dealing, concealment, and post-office profiteering instead of integrity, restraint, and trustworthiness.

The Amendment

The Public Trust, Transparency, and Integrity Amendment establishes a clear constitutional standard for all public officials at every level of government. It mandates plain-language, real-time disclosure of interactions with lobbyists, special interests, and foreign entities; imposes a strict prohibition on insider trading and active financial control while in office; permanently closes the revolving door between public office and lobbying; and requires rigorous pre-service vetting and continuous review for serious misconduct. Enforcement is entrusted to independent oversight bodies, with automatic penalties for violations, while preserving full due process, judicial review, and protections against false accusations. No branch, party, or office is exempt.

The Goals and Hopes

This amendment is not designed to expand government power, but to discipline it. Its purpose is to restore public trust by making corruption difficult, secrecy costly, and public service unattractive to those seeking power for the wrong reasons. By aligning authority with transparency and responsibility, it aims to renew confidence among voters, protect legitimate public servants, and ensure that those who govern do so openly, honestly, and for the common good. The long-term hope is a culture of governance where integrity is expected, accountability is routine, and the public can once again believe that their institutions serve them rather than themselves.

The Public Trust, Transparency, and Integrity Amendment

Proposed Constitutional Amendment

Preamble

Public office exists solely for the benefit of the people. Any person entrusted with public power shall be held to higher standards of transparency, restraint, and moral fitness than private citizens, while retaining full protection of due process and fundamental rights.

Section I — Transparency of Domestic Influence

All elected and appointed officials with decision-making authority shall publicly disclose any meeting, communication, or material interaction with lobbyists, political action committees, corporations, trade associations, or advocacy organizations seeking policy outcomes. Disclosures must include participants, timing, medium, subject matter in plain language, and any material or financial consideration discussed. Disclosures shall be published in a searchable public database within seventy-two hours. Willful failure to disclose shall constitute criminal misconduct.

Section II — Foreign Influence & Intelligence Contacts

Any contact with foreign governments, state-linked entities, political parties, or intelligence-affiliated persons must be disclosed. Classified contacts may be temporarily withheld from public release only with written justification and independent inspector review. Undisclosed foreign contact constitutes presumptive misconduct.

Section III — Financial Conflicts & Insider Trading

Officials shall not actively trade securities or financial instruments while in office. Assets must be placed in verified blind trusts or frozen for the duration of service. These restrictions apply equally to spouses and dependent children. Violations constitute felony offenses subject to automatic audit.

Section IV — Revolving Door & Post-Office Restrictions

Former officials are permanently prohibited from lobbying agencies or legislative bodies they previously served or oversaw. A ten-year cooling-off period applies to employment or consulting within industries directly regulated during service.

Section V — Moral Fitness & Continuous Vetting

All officials shall undergo background investigations prior to service and periodic review thereafter. Credible evidence of sexual predation, abuse of minors, coercion, or extortion shall result in immediate temporary suspension of authority pending adjudication. Due process protections remain absolute.

Section VI — Independent Oversight & Enforcement

Independent integrity commissions with fixed terms and bipartisan appointment shall audit disclosures, investigate violations, and refer cases for prosecution. All actions remain subject to judicial review.

Section VII — Universal Application

This amendment applies equally to all branches, parties, and levels of government. No exemption may be granted by statute, regulation, or executive action.

Section VIII — Ratification & Implementation

Congress and the states shall enact enabling legislation within twenty-four months of ratification. No implementing law may weaken the standards herein.

Anticipated Criticisms & Prepared Responses
The Public Trust, Transparency, and Integrity Amendment

“This would discourage qualified people from public service.”

Public office is not intended to compete with private-sector compensation or freedom. It is a temporary position of trust. Those unwilling to accept transparency and restraint are precisely those least suited for public authority.

“This violates privacy and civil liberties.”

The amendment regulates the exercise of public power, not private life. It explicitly preserves due process, judicial review, and penalties for false accusations. Higher transparency is a condition of holding authority, not a loss of rights.

“This creates unelected oversight bodies with too much power.”

Oversight bodies are constrained by fixed terms, bipartisan appointment, removal only for cause, and full judicial review. Their authority is investigative and referential, not legislative or punitive.

“The insider trading ban is too extreme.”

Active trading by officials with access to non-public information undermines trust and invites corruption. Blind trusts or asset freezes protect both the public and honest officials from suspicion.

“Lifetime lobbying bans are unfair and unconstitutional.”

The amendment does not restrict employment broadly; it restricts influence-peddling related to prior authority. Former officials remain free to teach, write, work in unrelated fields, or serve in non-profits.

“This could be weaponized against political opponents.”

Weaponization thrives in secrecy and discretionary enforcement. This amendment applies equally to all parties and branches, includes severe penalties for false accusations, and subjects all actions to judicial review.

“Foreign contact rules would harm diplomacy.”

The amendment allows classified diplomatic contacts with inspector-general review and delayed disclosure. It bans undisclosed influence, not legitimate diplomacy.

“Moral fitness provisions are vague and dangerous.”

Action is limited to credible evidence of serious crimes and allows only temporary suspension pending adjudication. No punishment occurs without full due process.

“Existing laws already address these issues.”

Existing ethics laws are statutory, fragmented, weakly enforced, and easily bypassed. Constitutional standards provide permanence, uniformity, and durability across political cycles.

Bad-faith claim: “This is authoritarian.”

Authoritarian systems concentrate power in secrecy. This amendment disperses power through transparency, oversight, and judicial review.

Bad-faith claim: “You just want to purge politicians you dislike.”

The amendment applies equally to all parties and offices. Integrity standards threaten only those who rely on opacity.

Bad-faith claim: “This will never pass.”

Most constitutional reforms face skepticism before adoption. The role of amendments is to define enduring standards, not merely codify political convenience.

Documented Ethics, Transparency, and Conflict-of-Interest Cases
A Neutral, Factual Dossier

Purpose: This dossier presents a non-partisan, factual overview of publicly documented cases, investigations, prosecutions, and reporting related to ethics, transparency, financial conflicts of interest, and post-office influence among public officials. Inclusion does not imply guilt beyond what has been adjudicated or formally reported. The examples are intended solely to illustrate systemic issues addressed by the proposed Public Trust, Transparency, and Integrity Amendment.

Christopher Collins — Former U.S. Representative (New York)

Christopher Collins pleaded guilty to federal charges related to insider trading and lying to investigators. The case involved the transmission of non-public pharmaceutical company information to family members, who then executed stock trades. Collins resigned from Congress following his conviction.

References:

- U.S. Department of Justice (SDNY) press releases and court records
- United States v. Collins, federal court filings

Stephen E. Buyer — Former U.S. Representative (Indiana)

Stephen Buyer was convicted of insider trading involving misuse of non-public information obtained through post-office consulting relationships. The court found that confidential information was used for personal gain.

References:

- U.S. Department of Justice prosecution records
- United States v. Buyer, federal court filings

Sheldon Silver — Former Speaker, New York State Assembly

Sheldon Silver was convicted on federal corruption charges involving bribery and misuse of official position for financial benefit through undisclosed referral arrangements.

References:

- U.S. Department of Justice public corruption summaries
- United States v. Silver, federal court filings

Jack Evans — Former Member, Council of the District of Columbia

Jack Evans resigned after ethics investigations found conflicts of interest and improper relationships with entities doing business with the city, resulting in civil penalties.

References:

- DC Board of Ethics and Government Accountability reports
- Public reporting by regional and national media

2020 Congressional Stock Trading Controversy (COVID-19 Briefings)

Multiple U.S. Senators were reported to have traded stocks after receiving non-public COVID-19 economic briefings. Ethics and DOJ reviews occurred; no criminal charges were filed, raising bipartisan concerns about existing disclosure and insider trading rules.

References:

- Senate Ethics Committee statements
- U.S. Department of Justice review announcements

Widespread STOCK Act Disclosure Violations — Congress

Investigative reporting documented repeated failures by members of Congress and senior staff to comply with STOCK Act disclosure deadlines, highlighting enforcement limitations.

References:

- Business Insider investigative reporting
- Congressional disclosure records

Wilbur Ross — Former U.S. Secretary of Commerce

Wilbur Ross faced ethics scrutiny regarding financial interests intersecting with policy domains overseen by the Department of Commerce. No criminal findings resulted, but concerns were raised regarding disclosure and conflict-of-interest management.

References:

- Office of Government Ethics disclosures
- Congressional inquiries and public reporting

Contextual Note

These cases span multiple parties, jurisdictions, and levels of government. Some resulted in criminal convictions, others in civil penalties, ethics findings, or formal investigations without charges. Collectively, they illustrate recurring structural risks addressed by the proposed amendment.

Attribution & Public Use License

This document was created and originally published by **TheOrderedLiberty**. It is intended for public reading, discussion, sharing, and adaptation in service of civic understanding and constructive dialogue.

Primary publication channels:
Instagram: **@TheOrderedLiberty**
Substack: **https://theorderedliberty.substack.com**

License

This work is licensed under the **Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0)**.

What This Means (Plain Language)

You are free to share this document in full or in part, quote it, adapt it, or build upon its ideas, for any purpose and in any medium or format.

The sole requirement: Proper attribution must be given to **TheOrderedLiberty** as the original source.

Attribution Should Include

• The name **TheOrderedLiberty**
• The document title (if available)
• A link to the original publication, where possible

Attribution Example

“Originally published by TheOrderedLiberty. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.”

Authorship & Integrity

While adaptation and reuse are encouraged, no individual or organization may claim authorship of this work or its original framework without explicit permission from TheOrderedLiberty.

First published by **TheOrderedLiberty**
Publication date: 2/17/26